Life
NOV 1 1954

ASTRAL ADVENTURER

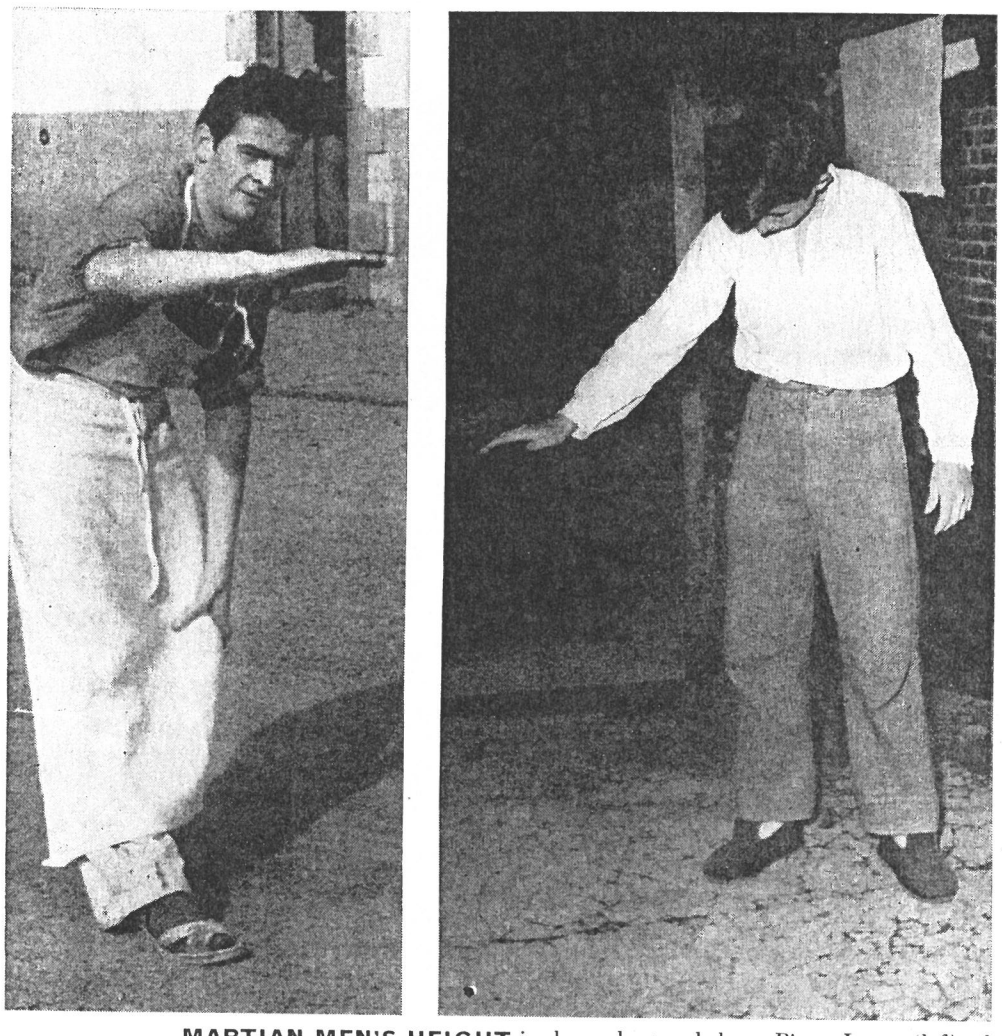
Frenchmen report meetings with unlikely creature

DEPUTY DE LEOTARD

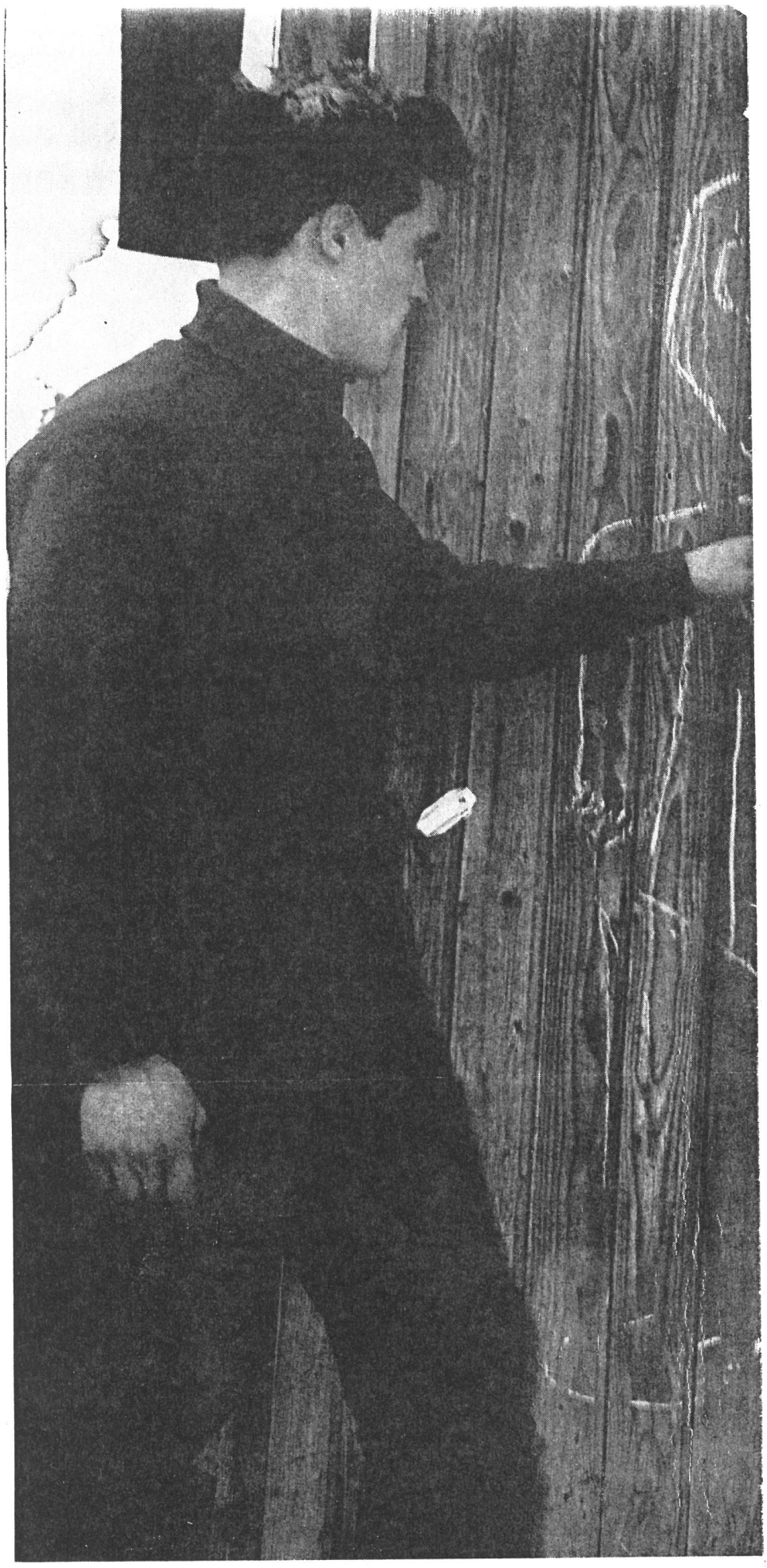
The summer in France had been enough to unnerve anyone. It had rained steadily. The crops were bad. The rabbits had died off by the thousands. And it was absolutely the worst wine year since the war. France was in no state to cope with another crisis, but it came anyway. Out of the autumn skies, from Brittany to the Riviera, dropped a covey of extraterrestrial vehicles and unearthly men. They were not the vaguely described objects sometimes seen by children and frightened old ladies. Good solid citizens: farmers, bakers and other workingmen, who had the reputation for being reliable, swore they had seen them. They even drew diagrams and pictures to prove it.

The vehicles they described were of many shapes: whirling disks, flying cigars, crowns, comets and winged mushrooms. They left skid marks in the grass at one place, gashes on a wooden railway tie in another. Out of these conveyances stepped little men of many colors, mostly pleasing pastels, though one had zebra stripes and another changed color with chameleonlike ease. They wore plastic helmets, sleeveless diving suits, orange corsets or cellophane wrappers, and spoke English, French or even Latin. Some, however, were left speechless by what they saw.

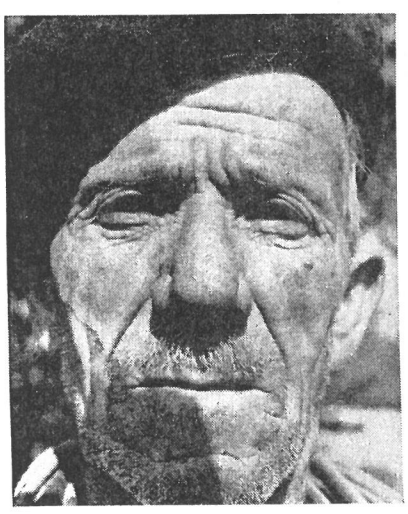
French newspapers suddenly carried almost as many reports about Martians, or whoever the outer space visitors were, as they did about Mendès-France. In the National Assembly, Deputy Pierre de Leotard (*inset*), who sometimes wears sort of an extraterrestrial look himself though he is actually a Radical-Socialist, demanded to know if the invasion threatened France's security. The government, in the novel position of facing a kind of crisis no French government had ever faced before, reserved answer.

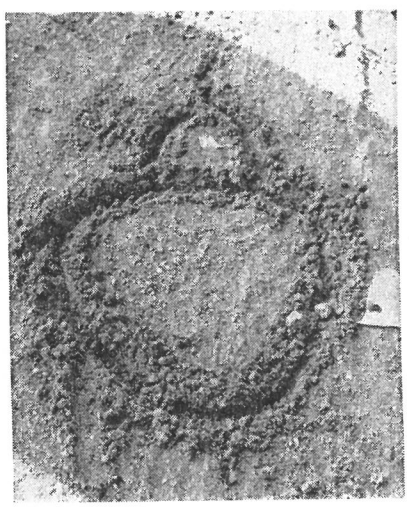


MARTIAN MEN'S HEIGHT is shown by two bakers. Pierre Lucas (*left*) of Loctudy was going to well when, he said, orange ball fell from the sky. Suddenly a small bearded figure with one eye in middle of his forehead tapped him on shoulder. Serge Pochet (*right*) of Marcoing was approached by two small shadows.



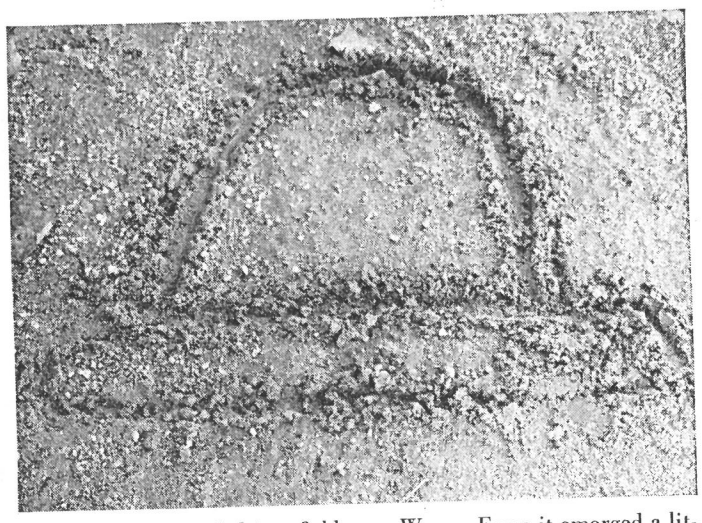
DUMPY LITTLE SPACE MAN THEY SAW LAND IN LUMINOUS SPHERE ON





GLOBULAR SPACESHIP SKETCH (*right*) by Gregoire Odut depicts golden disk he saw zoom from Wassy after two-legged creature leaped out for hasty look.

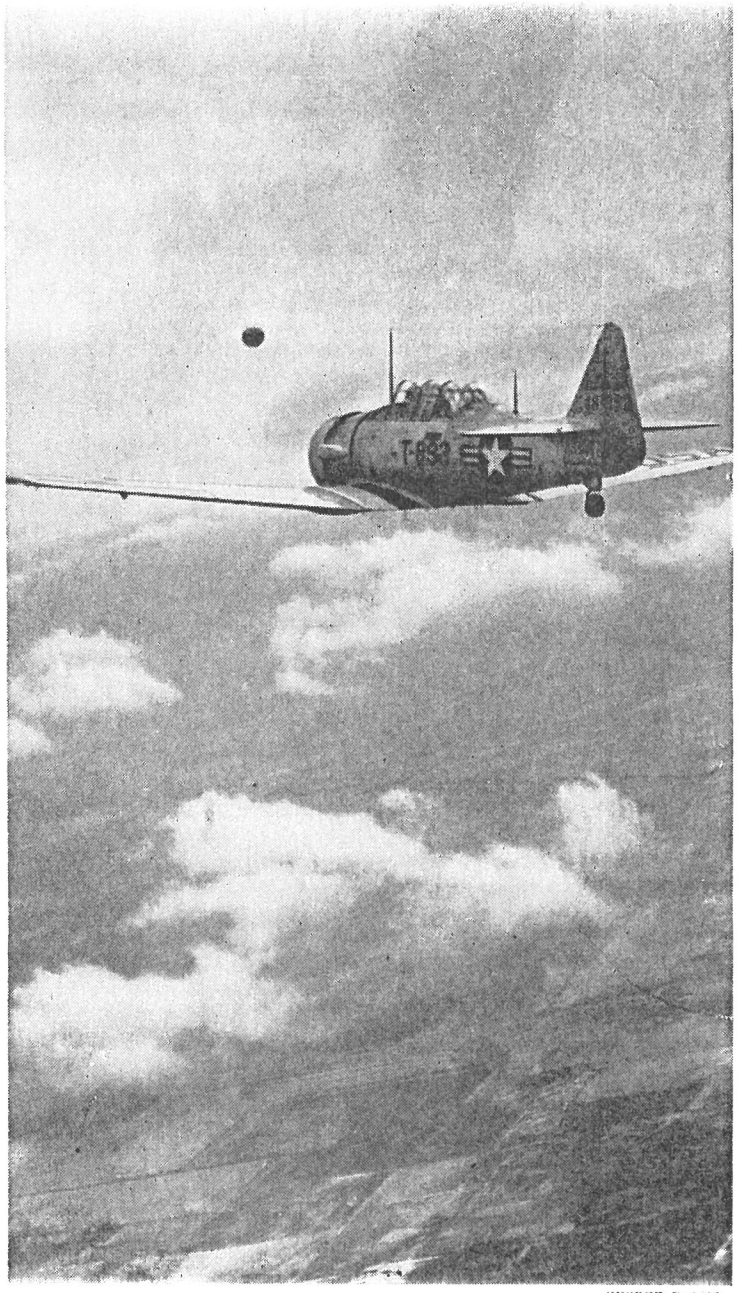
BASKETBALL COURT NEAR TOULOUSE IS DRAWN ON BARN BY FRANCOIS PANERO (LEFT) AND JEAN OLIVIER



HATLIKE SPACESHIP SKETCH (*right*) was drawn in dirt by Jean Narcy to describe craft he says landed in a field near Wassy. From it emerged a little whiskered man in fur coat and orange corset.

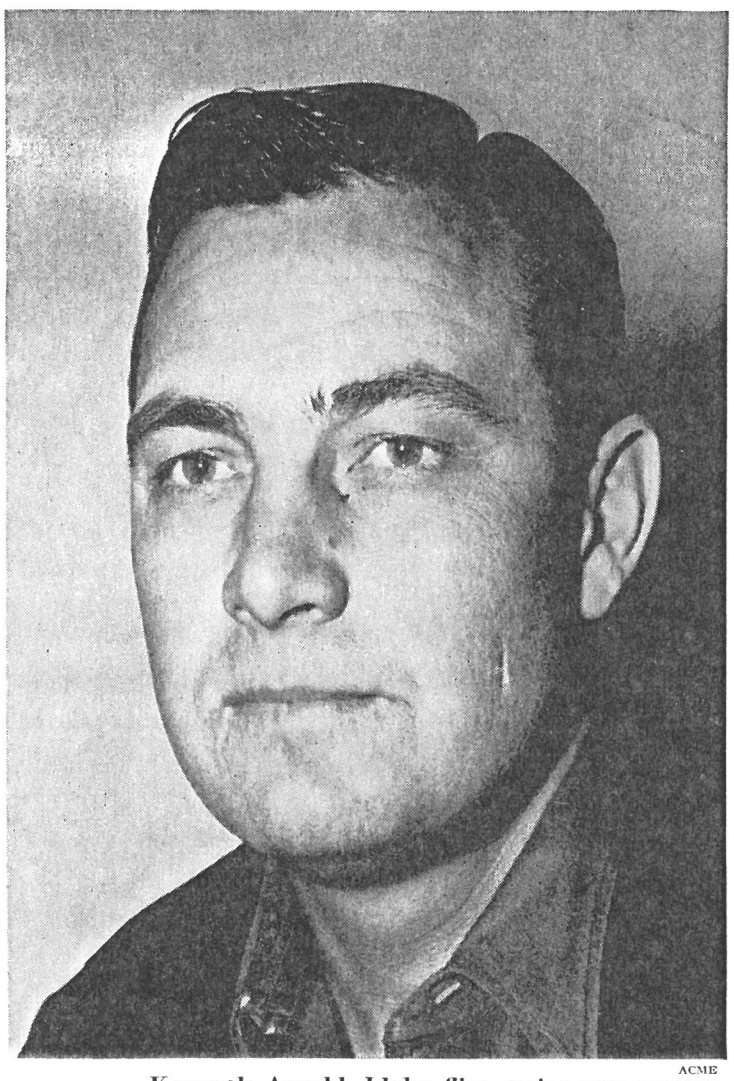
DESCRIBING SAUCER TAKE-OFF from field near Amiens, Yves de Gillaboz (*left*), Emile Renard point to sky where they saw "Martian machine" belching puffs of smoke as it vanished from sight.

SAUCER SCRATCHES on railroad tie were circled in chalk by Marius Dewilde of Quarouble who carries the tie home to preserve proof of the rust-colored flying contraption he saw land on tracks.



GEORGE BURNS

Weather balloons, like the one this plane is approaching, explain some "disks," but not all.



ACME

Kenneth Arnold, Idaho flier, twice saw groups of "saucers," set off coast-to-coast excitement.

WHAT YOU CAN BELIEVE ABOUT FLYING SAUCERS

By SIDNEY SHALETT

Is there "something funny" about the silence that still envelops the mysterious disks that alarmed us all and lured three military pilots to crash deaths? Were they missiles from Russia? From Mars? Air Intelligence probed 250 reports and here, for the first time, are its findings.

PART ONE

DATING as far back as the eighteenth century, and possibly earlier, the annals of our race bulge with solemn reports of queer things seen undulating through the sky. Except in publications frankly devoted to fantasy, American literature and journalism have until recently been relatively free of such frightening accounts. But the Great Flying Saucer Scare, coming like a long-delayed and violent reaction, showed us to be, when frightened, as credulous as anyone else.

The scare had its origin in June, 1947. On the twenty-fourth day of that month, at one minute before three P.M., Kenneth Arnold, of Boise, Idaho, piloting his three-place cabin plane in the state of Washington, from Chehalis to Yakima, saw what appeared to him to be nine shiny disks. They seemed to be flipping and flashing along over Mount Rainier. Arnold reported his experience, and the Great Flying Saucer Scare began.

Within a few days it had achieved a rich, full-blown screwiness. Observers in practically all the forty-eight states and the District of Columbia reported seeing "saucers." Descriptions of the mysterious sky-borne objects achieved a lush variance. Besides disks, there were flying doughnuts and flame-spurting teardrops; there were wingless fuselages and balls of fire which streaked through the heavens at supersonic speeds, or hovered like a helicopter, or oscillated like an electric fan.

In speculation, oral and published, the saucers—as the fearsome freaks came to be widely called—were attributed variously to the machinations of the Russians, of our own secret military research and even of men from Mars. The deaths of three military aviators stemmed from the scare; one actually losing his life in pursuit of one of the so-called saucers. The furor grew to such proportions that the United States Air Force—with considerable and understandable reluctance—finally set up a special project to investigate the reported phenomena. To date, those in charge of the projects have collected reports on some 250 instances of "unidentified flying objects," and, though the scare has subsided considerably in late months, the list of incidents continues to grow.

The hardiness of the scare suggests that it might break out again in full bloom at any time, maybe at an embarrassing moment in our international affairs, and, with this thought in mind, I have spent the better part of two months investigating it. I have had what seemed to be the wholehearted co-operation of the Air Force in Washington and in other parts of the country. I have found that if there is a scrap of bona fide evidence to support the notion that our inventive geniuses or any potential enemy, on this or any other planet, is spewing saucers over America, the Air Force has been unable to locate it.

In reaching this finding, I am necessarily accepting the assurances of the highest officers of the Air Force, and those of its research and development experts, that they have nothing concealed up their sleeves. Of course, there are a lot of people, some of them quite sober citizens, who insist that there is "something funny" about the saucer business. These will probably insist that the Air Force is kidding me. But I don't think it is.

One of the men who would be hard to convince that the Air Force is being completely frank is Kenneth Arnold, who saw those first famous nine. Arnold describes himself as sole owner of a small concern which distributes fire-fighting apparatus in five Western states. He also acts as Northwestern distributor for the type of plane he was flying on the day he spotted the saucers.

Arnold was flying at 9200 feet when he first saw them, he later wrote in the first of a series of articles he did on the subject for a Chicago-published magazine called Fate. His first article, titled I *Did* See the Flying Disks, happened to appear in the maiden number of Fate, which styles itself a "cosmic reporter." The maiden issue also included articles titled Behind the Etheric Veil and Invisible Beings Walk the Earth.

Arnold did a number of things to get a fix on the strange objects. He concluded (a) that they were "saucerlike disks" with no tails; (b) that they flew extremely fast and "in a rather chainlike line, as if they were linked together," and (c) that, at a distance which he estimated as between twenty and twenty-five miles, each appeared somewhat smaller than a DC-4 airliner. Arnold said he had the flashing objects in sight for two and one half to three minutes, then they got away from him.

It was the immediate newspaper reports of Arnold's unusual experience which set off the excitement of June, 1947. Between then and the following Fourth of July, the newspapers and public officials were deluged with saucer reports from all over. The newspapers, on the whole, played the thing big, most of them mixing a little nervous whimsey with the upsetting reports.

The baffling thing about the reports was that, although some of the later ones obviously came from hoaxers and publicity seekers, others were coming in from persons whose standing in society was respectable. Army officers assigned to scientific projects, sane and sober commercial-airline pilots, Air Force test pilots and intelligence officers, police officers and deputy sheriffs, businessmen, astronomers and weather observers had incidents to describe.

One of the earliest of the more perplexing cases occurred on July 8, 1947, two weeks after Kenneth Arnold's experience, at Muroc Air Field in California. Muroc is the Air Force's most hush-hush sanctum, where the Air Force and Navy test their secret supersonic models, so it's not a place where you would expect the personnel to get unduly excited by strange things in the sky. But something did occur at Muroc, and the Air Force maintains that no experimental craft was involved.

It was Lt. Joseph C. McHenry, the billeting officer, who, walking toward his office at 9:30 A.M., first saw "two silver objects of either spherical or disklike shape, moving at about 300 miles per hour at approximately 8000 feet." He yelled at a couple of sergeants and a stenographer, who were near by, and they saw them too. Three more witnesses were summoned, but the objects had disappeared by this time. However, a third object hove into sight, and five out of the seven witnesses saw it. Everyone was certain that, because of the apparent speed and the fact that they seemed to be traveling against the prevailing wind, the objects couldn't have been any type of weather or cosmic-ray balloon.

At noon the same day, Maj. Richard R. Shoop, attached to the office of the Chief of Technical Engineering Division, had his attention directed by a Colonel Gilkey to "what appeared to be a thin metallic object," which played lazily over the field, diving, climbing and oscillating for eight minutes. At the same time, a test pilot in the vicinity saw a strange whitish object floating to earth from a high altitude. And another test pilot recalled that, on the previous morning, he, too, had seen a roundish object whirling around at 12,000-feet altitude.

Four days prior to this, on the Fourth of July, the city of Portland, Oregon, had fairly erupted with saucer sightings. It began when Patrolman Kenneth A. McDowell was feeding the pigeons on the parking lot back of Precinct I. "I noticed," he reported later, "that the pigeons became quite excited over something." He looked around to see what had disturbed them and saw five large objects, disk-shaped and of undetermined color, in the air. They dipped up and down in an oscillating motion at great speed and disappeared quickly. McDowell notified the police radio, which broadcast an alert to all patrol cars.

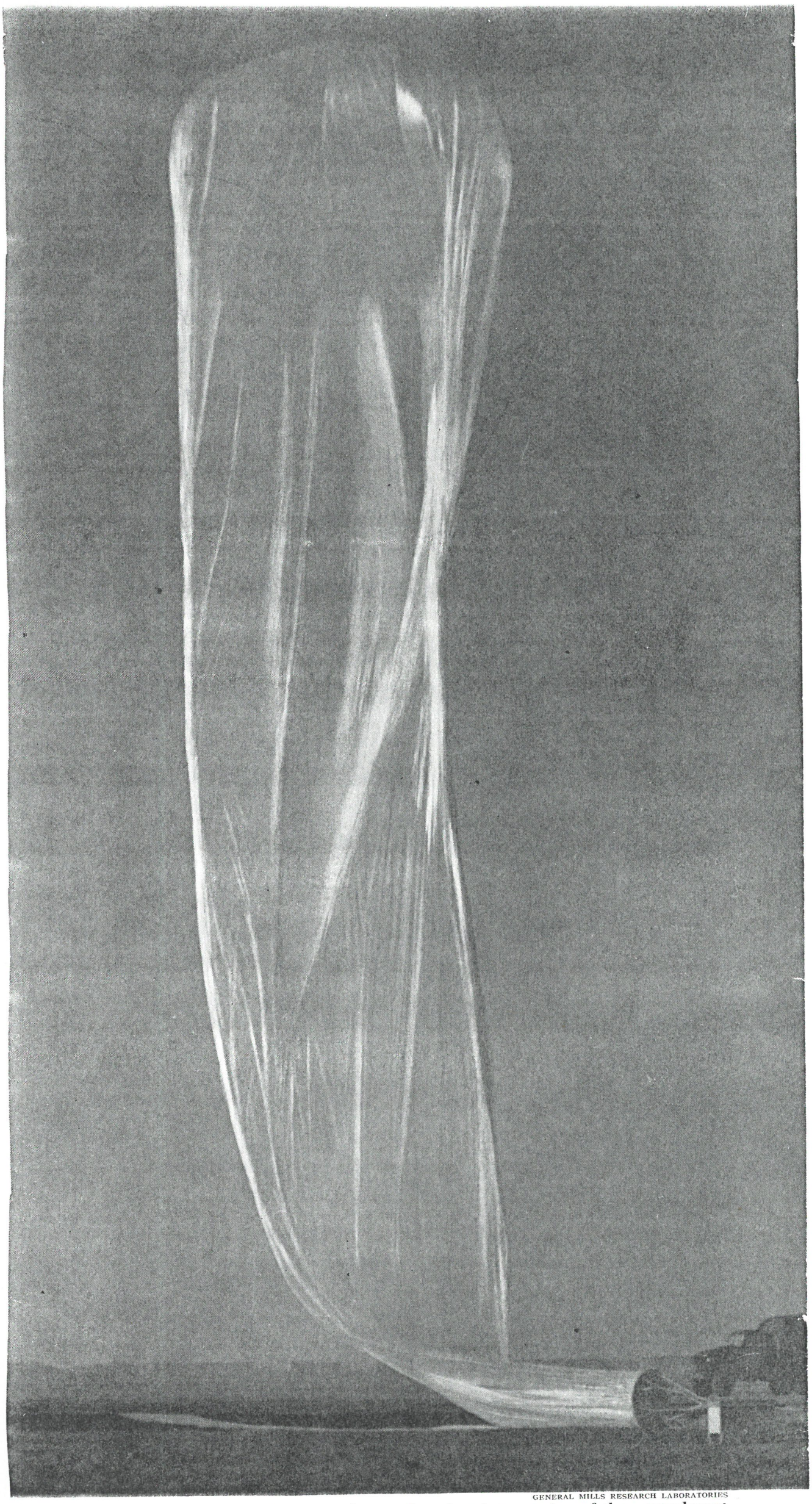
At exactly the same time in another part of the city, two other Portland patrolmen, W. A. Lissy, who is a private pilot, and D. W. Ellis, saw "three flat round disks which flew at terrific speed in straight-line formation, the last disk fluttering very rapidly in a sideway arc." They saw no evidence of what made the things go, no vapor of smoke trails and no sound. They estimated altitude of the disks as 40,000 feet. In still another part of the city, Patrolman Earl E. Patterson, a former Air Force pilot, saw one disk, and a harbor pilot, backed up by two witnesses, reported seeing "three to six" objects which resembled "a shiny chromium hub cap off a car." Various citizens also saw the things, including one housewife who described it as looking "like a new dime flipping around."

The Geese With a Humming Sound

IN near-by Vancouver, Washington, a crew of deputy sheriffs heard the Portland police broadcast. They ran out to look at the sky and, sure enough, over Portland they saw "twenty to thirty objects... like a flight of geese." The deputies even heard "a low humming sound."

That evening Capt. E. J. Smith, of United Air Lines, was piloting his ship from Boise, Kenneth Arnold's home town, to Seattle. According to a report published in Fate, Captain Smith, before taking off, had remarked, apropos of the disk stories, "I'll believe 'em when I see 'em." Over Emmett, Idaho, he said he did see nine strange objects, and his story was corroborated by Copilot Ralph Stevens and Stewardess Marty Morrow. First there were five "somethings" which were "thin and smooth on the bottom and rough-appearing on top," Smith told investigators. Later, four more came into view. In all, they were observed for some twelve minutes, silhouetted against the sunset.

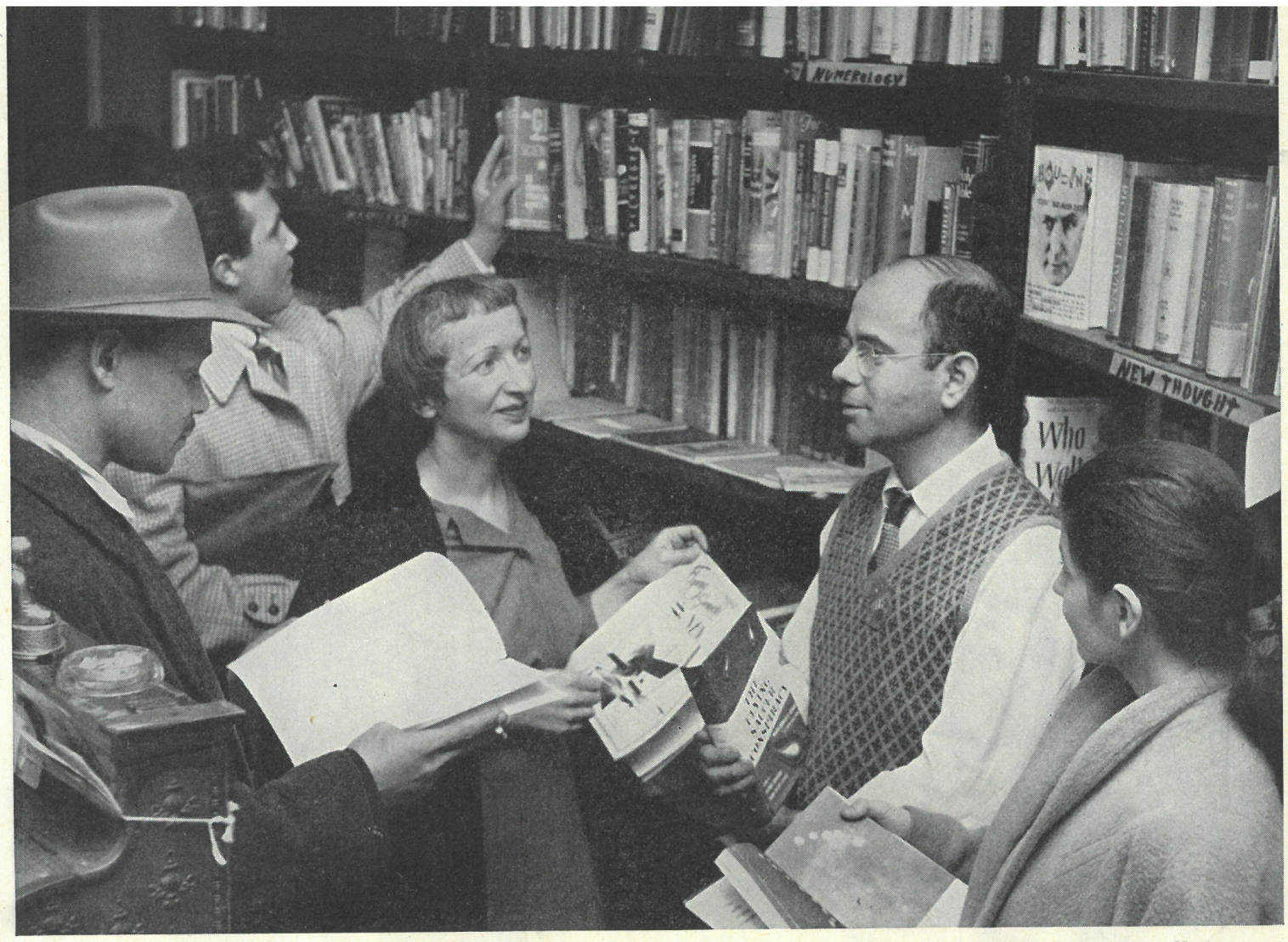
One of the strangest and most tragic of all the saucer cases on record was the incident of January 7, 1948, at Godman Field, an Air Force base at Fort Knox, Kentucky. It was early afternoon—between 1:45 and 1:50 P.M.—when T/Sgt. Quinton A. Blackwell, chief operator in the Godman control tower, first saw the object appear over the south portion of the field. Fifteen minutes earlier the sergeant from the commanding officer's office had telephoned him to be on the lookout, saying that Fort Knox military police and the state police had warned that large, circular object, *(Continued on Page 136)*



GENERAL MILLS RESEARCH LABORATORIES

A flying disk at rest? Expansion in the stratosphere makes gleaming monsters of these translucent plastic balloons used by the Navy for cosmic-ray research. They have floated over all parts of the U. S.

Mar 10/58



Rigberg (glasses) collects interplanetary intelligence and sells up to 10,000 space books a year in his Third Avenue shop in New York.

SEPost

He Runs Flying-Saucer Headquarters

Outer space is just a big back yard to James Rigberg, the man who collects "eyewitness reports" from travelers to Venus and other cosmic whistle stops.

By John Kobler

If a creature from outer space ever alights in New York City—and some people insist that such visitations have already occurred—he or she or it should proceed straightaway to a tiny bookstore at 1597 Third Avenue, and pay respects to the owner, one James Sylvester Rigberg. Nobody has striven harder than Rigberg to foster belief in the reality of space men and space ships.

A small, mild, balding man of forty-two, with pronounced psychic leanings, Rigberg operates his store six days a week, from eight A.M. to ten P.M., chiefly as a clearinghouse for interplanetary intelligence. Assisted by his wife, he keeps a file of reports on unearthly goings-on, as telephoned in or written to him by sky watchers the country over—he gets some 200 reports a week. Rigberg sells books and periodicals on the subject, and exhibits paintings and photographs; one shows two Californians strolling companionably with a Martian what-is-it two feet high. He also delivers lectures, heads the Flying Saucer News Club and publishes a monthly magazine, the Flying Saucer News.

"What are Flying Saucers?" asks a sign in Rigberg's show window. "Are they from outer space? How do they fly? Are they friend or foe? Have they been contacted? If so, by whom? Why are there so many Flying Saucer Clubs? Why does the Air Force consider them top secret? Find the answers to these questions and many more. Visit the J. S. Rigberg bookstore." He has distributed copies of this sign throughout the city.

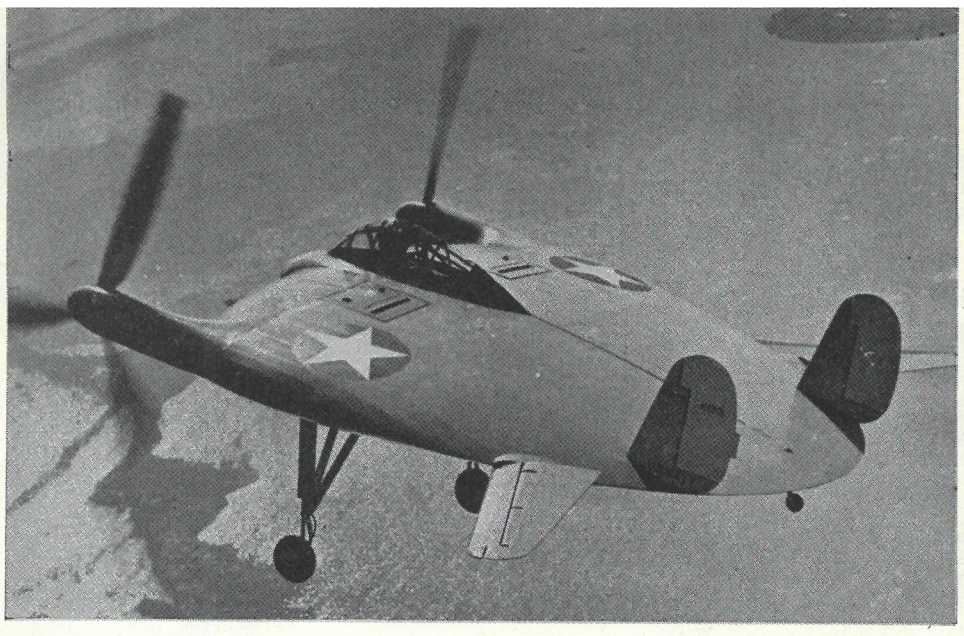
Rigberg is in no wise discouraged by the skepticism of earth men like Air Secretary Donald A. Quarles, who recently announced that an eight-year investigation of flying-saucer reports had yielded no evidence whatever that such things exist.

"The week the statement comes out," says Rigberg, "my sales went up forty, fifty per cent."

Rigberg's magazine is a sixteen-page offset production selling at twenty-five cents, circulation about 1000. It abounds in fascinating sightings: "The J. C. Sutton family, of Kelly, Kentucky, (to cite a recent example) reported to Police Chief Russell Greenwell that they saw 15 odd-shaped men step down the gangplank of a space-ship that had landed on their farm. It was shaped like a bathtub and glowed like a fireball, the family informed the police."

New space books are reviewed in Flying Saucer News: "My Flight to Venus, by Mrs. Dana Howard, represents the most fantastic experience ever experienced by mankind. It is

From the roof above his store, Rigberg watches for unearthly objects. He says he once saw a space ship.



Such objects as these stir up flying-saucer reports. At left is an experimental Navy plane, the Flying Flapjack. At right are odd-shaped cloud formations over Marseilles, France.

Mar 10/58

At a meeting in El Monte, Cal.—Daniel Fry (kneeling) is one who hopes to establish radio contact with "extra-terrestrial friends."

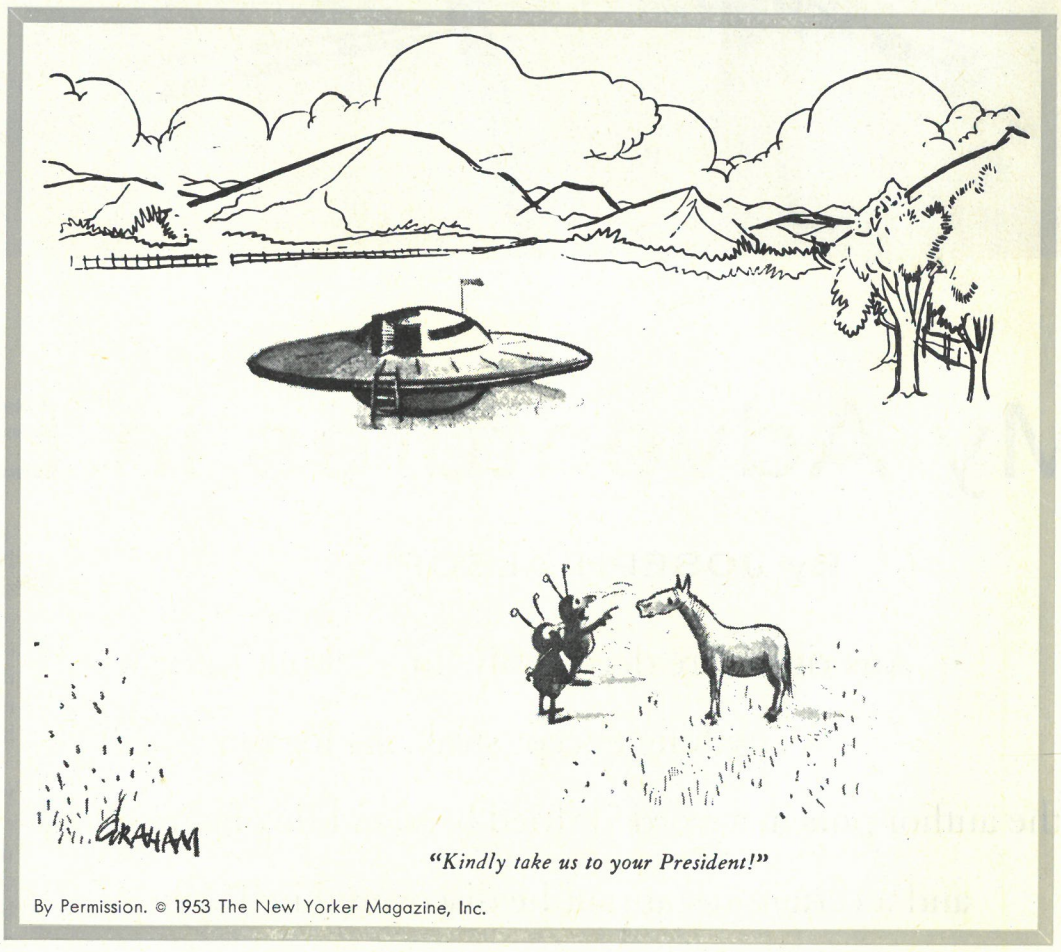
a story of life and love on Venus as the author lived it." Announcements and minutes of saucer club meetings are published: "Paradise Space-Craft Research Group is getting started on its way to becoming a very nice center. Present meetings are held at the home of Mrs. Evah Edwards, 307 Pearson Rd., Paradise, California, Wed. evening at 7:30 P.M."

A leading feature of each issue is an interpretation of space phenomena by some specialist in the field, such as Mrs. John Storm, a professional New York occultist, who practices under the name of Nianda Lynnabeth Hayden. According to Mrs. Storm, "It was approximately twenty-one million years ago that the human race on this planet Earth individualized into male and female beings, and it was at that time that Sanat Kumara and his group of assistants came here from Venus to guide the evolution of mankind. The great Venusian adept is still here." Mrs. Storm, however, declines to disclose his address.

To encourage earthbound travel by visitors from other planets, Rigberg maintains a standing offer of a free one-year subscription to Flying Saucer News to any of them who will claim it in person. This generosity has been eclipsed by the president of a Midwestern baking-products company, who authorized Rigberg to publish the following proclamation: "To the first planetary visitor, a cottage rent-free for one year, $1000 worth of biscuits, breads and flour, and, if sales perk up as a result of the publicity, a salary of $1000 a week."

The bulk of Rigberg's business is in space books. He has stocked at one time or other more than fifty different titles, selling 5000 to 10,000 copies a year. Among his best-selling authors is "Professor" George Adamski, of Palomar Gardens, California, born sixty-five years ago in Poland. Adamski formerly headed a mystical cult known as the Royal Order of Tibet, and has tried his hand at science fiction. His first purportedly nonfiction work, written in collaboration with an Englishman, Desmond Leslie, recounted how he saw a "Venusian scout ship" land in the remoteness of the California desert on November 20, 1952, and conversed in sign language with a member of the crew.

The Venusian's appearance, as Adamski described it, did not differ radically from that of earth inhabitants, except that he was much handsomer. He conveyed a warning that atomic-test explosions might endanger life on his native planet, (Continued on Page 69)



"Kindly take us to your President!"

By Permission. © 1953 The New Yorker Magazine, Inc.

Little men from other planets may be a laughing matter to cartoonists and other skeptics. But Rigberg offers a free Flying Saucer News subscription to any outer-space creature who will claim it.

He Runs Flying-Saucer Headquarters

(Continued from Page 27)

as well as on earth. "Boom! Boom!" Adamski quotes him as having said to make his point. The book includes a photograph the author snapped of the scout ship. An unimaginative observer might easily mistake it for an ordinary electric-light chandelier, photographed from below.

A sequel to this startling narrative is called Inside the Space Ships. Herein Adamski's Venusian friend, whom he calls Orthon, orders two fellow space men, Firkon and Ramu, to trace the professor to Los Angeles, lead him into the desert again and help him into the chandelierlike conveyance for a spin through the stratosphere. An arresting aspect of this "factual" voyage is that many of its details parallel those of a science-fiction thriller Adamski penned years earlier.

Rigberg regards Adamski with awe, and he was overjoyed not long ago when the professor paid him a surprise visit. There are several other authors whose books Rigberg delights to circulate. One is Cedric Allingham, a Bombay-born Englishman, who photographed a Martian in the north of Scotland and recorded a lengthy conversation with him. The Martian equivalent of "yes," as nearly as Allingham could reproduce it phonetically, is "qu-ll." Another author is George W. van Tassel, manager of an airport at Giant Rock, California, who received planetary communications by a kind of telepathic vibration. ("Salutations. I am Hulda. Senior in command, 11th projection, 7th wave, realms of Schare. . . . Your people shall witness more fireballs. Discontinue.")

And there is Truman Betherum, a mechanic and neighbor of Adamski's, who has been practically commuting between earth and a hitherto-unknown planet, Clarion, where the female inhabitants are uniformly beautiful, where no jails exist, no tobacco, no liquor. And Cecil Michael, who indicates that space men get around everywhere, because, after traveling with a group of them, he was able to chart "the topography of hell."

Rigberg does not accept without reservations all the tales told in the books he sells. Take his reference to Is Another World Watching Us?, by Gerald Heard: "Somehow I don't quite agree," he says, "that insects control flying saucers."

The Rigbergs' daily existence is a restricted one. They not only work fourteen hours a day at 1597 Third Avenue, they also live there, sharing a bedroom-kitchen unit at the rear. They frown on smoking and drinking as immoral, and their chief form of recreation is a walk around the block before retiring. Mrs. Rigberg wears no cosmetics, being a faithful member of the Pentecostal Church, an austere sect, and she devotes almost all of every Sunday to church activities.

Rigberg arrived at his present preoccupation by a winding road. He passed a somewhat bleak boyhood in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. His father having died when he was an infant and his mother being destitute, he was raised first in an orphanage, then by a Mennonite family. He studied agriculture for a while at the National Farm School in Bucks County, Pennsylvania, and weathered the depression as a farm hand in tobacco fields, before drifting to New York. In 1947 he was working as a counterman in a Manhattan restaurant, and to augment his pay he invested in a copying machine, which he operated in his boardinghouse room.

"One night," he recalls, "I get this psychic flash. I suddenly sense that I ought to insure my equipment against fire. So in the morning I make a down payment on a policy." The next day fire gutted the boardinghouse; Rigberg collected $300.

He was thus in a receptive frame of mind when he chanced to read an advertisement by the College of Divine Metaphysics, Inc., of Indianapolis, offering a correspondence course in "the psychology of business success." The tuition was $200, but Rigberg felt impelled to sign up. Completing the course in two years, he became the happy possessor of three degrees—doctor of metaphysics, doctor of divinity and doctor of psychology—which presumably qualified him to instruct others along similar lines.

One of his first pupils was a Vienna-born typist, Margaret Lecon, whom he met while browsing through a religious library. They were married a year later. Margaret, (*Continued on Page 72*)

THE SATURDAY EVENING POST

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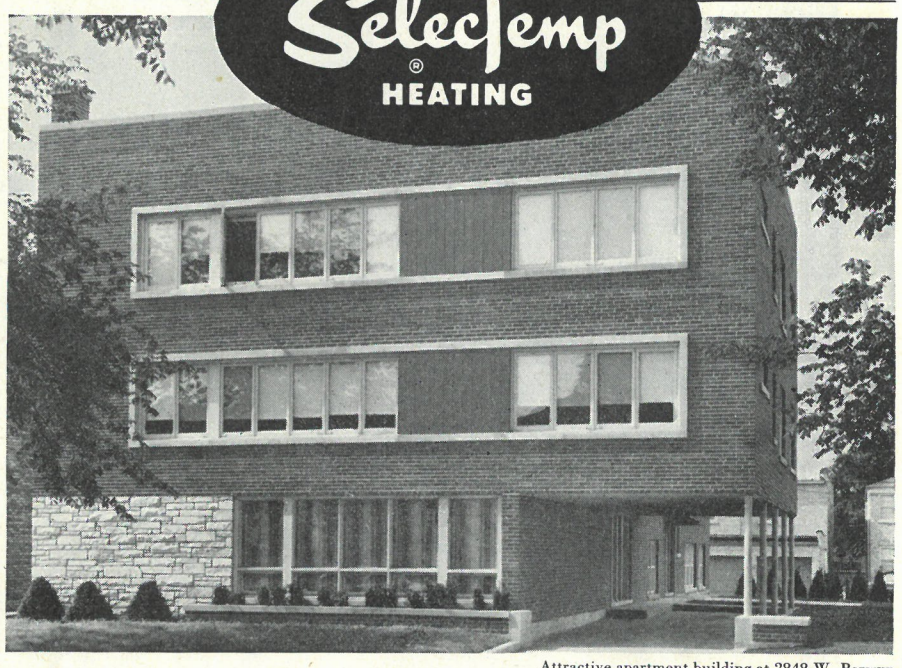

Attractive apartment building at 2848 W. Berwyn Avenue, Chicago, Ill., owned by Louis A. Pure. Architects, Comm, Comm and Moses, Chicago.

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"It's the first time in our experience that tenants do not complain about over and under heating."

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SelecTemp heating units are recessed into walls, requiring no floor space.

Says the owner, Mr. Louis A. Pure, "Our tenants are most gratified to be able to fully control the temperature of their various rooms . . . with the 1954-55 heating season over, we know that our fuel bill has been extremely low."

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FOLDING CHAIRS...STRONGEST, LAST LONGEST
Shwayder Bros., Inc., Institutional Seating Division, Dept. SP-2, Detroit 29, Michigan.

(*Continued from Page 69*) meanwhile, had acquired the degree of metaphysical practitioner of new thought, joined an astrological sect, the Church of Light, and a poetry center, the Avalon World Arts Academy, and written a booklet entitled God's Greatest Gift.

Three years ago, the couple decided to run, in their spare time, a shop specializing in occult literature and equipment. They rented their present store on Third Avenue, stocking it with such items as "Oil of Kyphi, the sacred perfume used by the Egyptians to secure the guidance and influence of the Sun god Ra," $1.50 a bottle; Van Van oil, a voodoo compound to ward off evil spirits, $1.10 a bottle; crystal balls, ouija boards, magic talismans for finding buried treasure; and High John the Conqueror Roots, a requisite to success in love and business.

"Naturally," says Rigberg, "we attracted all sorts of people."

One customer was a fifteen-year-old boy interested in flying-saucer literature. Rigberg had none, but in the request he discerned the hand of destiny. As an experiment, he laid in a supply of two titles—Behind the Flying Saucers, by Frank Scully; and Flying Saucers From Outer Space, by Donald A. Keyhoe.

Scully, a Hollywood correspondent for Variety, described the discovery in the desert of grounded space ships containing the corpses of planet men three feet tall. He got the story from an oil speculator named Silas Newton, who got it from an elusive "Dr. Gee." Keyhoe, a retired United States Marine Corps major, writing in sober scientific terms, accused the Air Force of deluding the public by withholding proof it had gathered of the existence of interplanetary craft.

Both books sold briskly, and Rigberg added similar material to his shelves, eagerly dipping into it himself. Then, to his unutterable joy, he made a sighting. "I was leaving the restaurant after work," he relates, "in the company of another employee, when I happen to glance up at the sky, and there, about a mile overhead, I see a dark, round, disk-shaped object. I tried to get a supporting affidavit from this fellow with me, but he was a Greek and didn't understand what I was talking about."

The experience moved Rigberg to quit his restaurant job and devote himself principally to the cause. While he still deals in ouija boards and Van Van oil occasionally, he rather fancies himself as the standard-bearer of space-manship.

Rigberg's potential market is sizable. At his last count, there were some fifty space-minded societies in this country, and at least twice that many abroad. The theories they expound cover a wide range. On the extreme right stands a group typified by James W. Moseley, aged twenty-four, a former Princeton student, now residing in Fort Lee, New Jersey, who edits a bimonthly, Saucer News—circulation 2000. The Moseley school is ultra-conservative. "Plenty of flying saucers have been sighted," he says. "Sighted one myself a while back. But they were all made right here on earth. After all, Quarles himself admits that the Air Force has contracted for planes that will look like flying saucers. Well, I'm convinced that they've already been produced, and that's what people have been seeing."

Slightly left of center are the seventy members of the Civilian Saucer Intelligence, of New York, most of them earnest young men in their twenties. They feel, in the cautious words of their "research director," Ted Bloecher, by occupation a clerk, "that the evidence is now overwhelming that some of the saucers—perhaps a majority of them—are nonterrestrial vessels constructed and controlled by intelligent beings, who visit our skies for purposes unknown to us."

The CSI'ers will have no truck with occult speculations, or stories of Martians and such traipsing around the earth. They firmly disassociate themselves from Rigberg. At present they are trying to analyze 1400 reported sightings, a project somewhat hampered by their admittedly deficient knowledge of aeronautics. The theorist who exemplifies CSI policy is Keyhoe. Under its auspices he lectured last December in New York's St. Nicholas Arena to an audience of about 1000, who paid $1.10 admission. Keyhoe reiterated his charges that Pentagon officials are ducking the real facts.

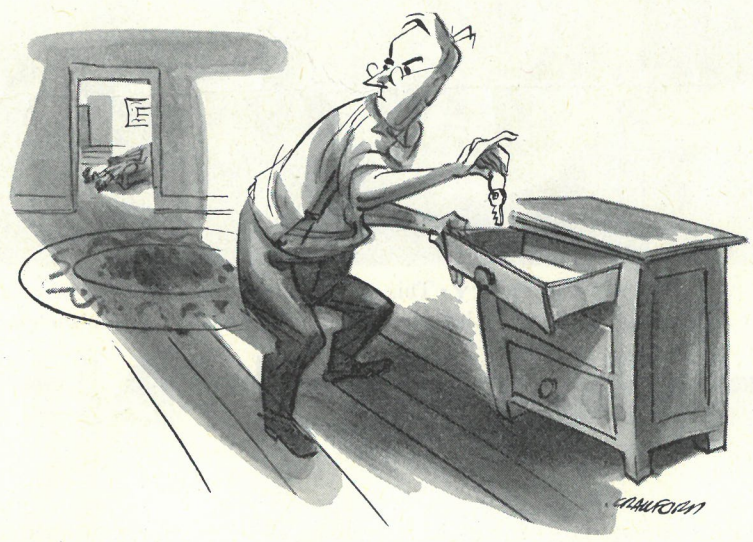
Westward from New York, the nature of space phenomena and the explanations advanced become more startling. In Cincinnati, the Civil Research Interplanetary Objects offers the theory that a war is now raging between the planets, and that many of our airplane disasters can be blamed on interference by space ships. In Chicago, the Cosmic Circle of Fellowship receives messages from space every Friday night in Parlor E of the La Salle Hotel, through William Ferguson, a seer, as Rigberg points out, of unique gifts.

But it is under the balmy skies of California that space cults bloom most gaudily. Here, to judge from the fervid testimony of the initiated, parked space vessels are as common as automobiles on a supermarket lot.

In Los Angeles, Eugene H. Drake, director of the Fellowship of Golden Illumination, photographs space creatures by infrared light and tape-records their conversations. Drake claims to have toured Venus on a "gravitonic sled." Los Angeles is also the headquarters of Franklin Thomas, whose New Age Publishing Company is a prolific source of otherworldly literature. In Del Mar, California, Mrs. Eloise Mellor, a medium, transmits while in a trance news of the movements of space legions, as revealed to her by Ashtar, a being who controls the entire universe.

Every March delegates from such groups flock to a two-day "Space-craft Convention" at George van Tassel's airport in the Mojave Desert. The focal spot is an immense hollowed-out boulder wherein van Tassel communes with the planets. Last year's convention had an attendance of 3000, including Adamski, Scully and nearly the whole stable of New Age authors. A featured event was the appearance of a Detroit youth, Richard Miller, who said that he had been lately whizzed across country in a Martian ship. The pilot, Sol Tec by name, confided that 3,500,000 benevolent space pilots were shielding the earth from deadly cosmic rays into which it was drifting.

Rigberg, back in New York, keeps close tabs on these momentous happenings. He has but one regret—that he himself has been unable to sight more than one space ship and has never met a space man. "The trouble is," he says wistfully, "I'm so busy in the store I don't get outdoors much." THE END



You be the Judge

By WILLIAM DONALDSON

Finster's fourteen-year-old daughter, Phyllis, who was just like her mother, pestered him constantly for the car keys, although too young to drive. To keep her from sneaking away with the car, Finster hid the keys in a dresser drawer. But while he watched television, Phyllis made off with keys and car. Turning a corner too fast, she struck a pedestrian, who sued Finster for his injuries.

"Finster should have known that a teen-ager like Phyllis would find keys in an obvious hiding place like a dresser," the injured man contended. "He should have kept them on him. Having failed to guard the keys properly, he is responsible for my injuries."

"Where can a man hide something so that his children can't find it?" Finster countered. "Should I have slept with the car keys in my pajama pocket? I did all I could, so I'm not to blame."

If you were the judge, would you make Finster pay damages?

• • • • • • • • • • • • • • •

Finster did not have to pay. The court ruled that even if he had not hidden the keys well, he could not foresee that Phyllis would filch them and run down someone with his car.

Based upon a 1955 Illinois decision.

FLYING SAUCERS and *The Desert*

A PALM SPRINGS FAUBOURG HAS AN ANNUAL AL FRESCO CONVENTION FOR BELIEVERS IN TOURISTS FROM OUTER SPACE

By Frank Scully

Snapshot taken in July, 1956, by 16 year old Michael Savage of San Bernardino. Mike, trying out his new birthday camera, heard a whirring noise overhead and saw the mysterious flying object at left. That Mike is now a "believer" is evidenced in his statement to The VILLAGER, "This subject needs more clarification. Why does the Air Force not make public all data they have? If the public is to understand something, it must be well informed."

London has its Hyde Park, New York its Columbus Circle, Los Angeles its Pershing Square, and Palm Springs? Well, America's topmost desert resort has its sounding board, too. It happens to to be outside the city limits but we're claiming it as an annual attraction.

It's called Giant Rock, where every year just when clocks and watches are being changed to daylight-saving time, all shades of opinion gather to air their views over a loud speaker in a two-day convention. Though primarily designed to report what's new in the field of interplanetary travel, anything seemingly goes.

People—as many as 5,000—come from as far east as Detroit and as far west as Los Angeles to attend this convention. They come in all sorts of conveyances, and hundreds camp out Saturday night in trailers, portable tents, sleeping bags and their cars, for there are no hotels or motels at Giant Rock and the road, in and out, is one long sand trap.

Giant Rock is owned by Mr. and Mrs. George Van Tassel. He formerly was a test pilot for Lockheed, but several years ago he migrated to the desert outpost because it had an air strip and was hard to reach otherwise. It gave him privacy. Plenty of it. At least until he said he saw some flying saucers and talked to one of their pilots.

Soon he was attracting persons of similar mind and in time he set up a week-end seminar called the College of Universal Wisdom. This didn't leave room for all the pilgrims, so he decided to hold a space-craft convention each spring. Then they came in thousands, some even to take sunbaths, as well as to listen to the speeches.

The Van Tassels have a small lunch room but during the conventions they close it, being too busy to feed themselves or anybody else. Others moved in to fill the cavity. Trucks loaded with soft drinks, hot dogs, ice cream and other aids to sure-fire indigestion took over feeding those who were not smart enough to bring their own provender.

The press, news reels and tape-recording radio commentators usually come early Saturday, scoop what they can by noon and hit out for home before sundown. This assures them of not hearing the most startling revelations or photographing the biggest crowds because cars keep coming in Saturday night and the speakers get hotter by Sunday. The press naturally plays it safe. They write with tongue-in-cheek, which is fun if they would write that way about other conventions as well, which they rarely do.

Giant Rock is about an hour's run east of Palm Springs, up on the plateau of Morongo Valley, miles in the desert beyond Joshua Tree. It is far beyond where the pavement ends, 17 miles in fact. There the pro-Saucerians air their experiences, laying bare everything from the latest personal encounter with unidentified flying objects to the religious and social significance of these interplanetary phenomena.

Every year surprise speakers break out with hair-raising tales and the Van Tassels give them all a chance to sound off. The speakers climb a stairway to a watch tower and after a brief introduction by George Van Tassel, the microphone and public address system are theirs.

Radio and television stations frequently pride themselves on their spontaneous and unrehearsed programs but Giant Rock is the mostest in spontaneity I ever heard.

Myself referred to at the al fresco clambakes as the "Dean of Flying Saucers" because I seem to have written the first book on the subject, I am exhumed each year to talk, (no time limit is imposed on any speaker by Chairman Van Tassel, no matter how far the speaker *or* Van Tassel may wander from the subject) and then asked to remain on the elevated platform for the question and answer period, which ends each day.

Observers from the FBI, the Air Force, the Sheriff's office and I guess from Patton are on the grounds, checking on what I believe is the nicest lunar fringe in this far-flung land of lovable screwballs.

There's a story, (which I just made up) of a saucer landing near Patton and blowing a tire of its landing gear. While effecting a change, three nuts of a tire rim fell into a stream and were lost. The pilot looked around.

"Mister," called an inmate from behind the high wire fence, "take one nut from each of your other three wheels. That will hold your fourth wheel till you get back where you came from."

The pilot from outer space was amazed at this simple solution.

"We're crazy here," the inmate explained, "but we're not stupid."

The same could be said of those who gather each spring at Giant Rock, except that with each passing year their company gets bigger and it is not hard to tell who is crazy and who isn't. The latest to join their number are two men who were once big wheels in the Air Materiel Command, the division of the defense which had been assigned in 1949 to check on this flying saucer craze.

They now admit that there are such things as flying saucers, that the Air Force after evaluating some 4,000 sightings have at least 400 which could not be explained away as (1) conventional objects wrongly identified (2) a mild form of mass hysteria (3) hoaxes. They have movies, still photographer's shots and the personal reports of trained pilots, astronomers and radar specialists.

When I first plumped into this mystery in 1949, the Pentagonians, a strange race holed up in an odd-shaped building in our nation's capital, dismissed the whole inquiry as so much nonsense. However, they were stuck with 34 sightings which would not disappear when they rubbed an eraser over their blackboard.

For things which did not exist to increase from 34 to 400 in five years seems to me an amazing feat in legerdemain.

When I first put down the findings of magnetic research scientists in a literary trinket called *Behind the Flying Saucers,* I soon found myself in a war between the Saucerians (believers) and the Pentagonians (non-believers). Like all neutralists I found myself being pressured into one camp or the other, and in the end rather preferred the company of the Saucerians.

I dealt with grounded saucers and dead crews and so in a sense was more like a pathologist than a surgeon who would be dealing in live tissues and live issues.

In time I was followed by writers who reported personal interviews and flights with people from outer space. One reported he made eleven visits aboard a saucer north of Las Vegas. It was manned by a crew of more than 30 men and captained by a luscious number, billed as Aura Rhanes. She looked like a fugitive from a Vegas chorus line but said she actually was a grandmother where she came from. And where was that? Well, Clarion. You never heard of this planet? Neither have astronomers but the man's wife heard so much about it and this dame who captained the space ship that she divorced him last year.

Another, while working at White Sands, a government proving ground for rockets, found himself approached one night, invited aboard a saucer and flown to New York and back in less than you could say "It went that-a-way!" He, however, reported no female aboard and so his domestic life continues comparatively serene. He first told his tale at Giant Rock two years ago.

Still a third has reported between hard covers of several trips aboard saucers. He has photographed many of them. One of his photographs was credited by him to a contemporary who subsequently denied he took it. This has caused a continuous controversy in Saucerian circles but his other pictures have had confirmation by photographs of a similar design taken by observers as far away as England.

I was particularly interested in these photographic documents, because in *Behind the Flying Saucers* I had described a grounded object of similar design. It had three huge ball-bearings as a landing gear and was shaped like a giant sun-lamp.

Some scurrilous characters claim the photographs of my contemporary *were* sun-lamps, and not so gigantic either, but I have not joined the scoffers who believe because a thing can be simulated the original never existed.

Indeed in a television debate on the issue in Los Angeles, I pointed out to a former Air Force Captain, and head of Project Bluebook, the name of the defense arm's interplanetary inquiry, that I had seen Paramount make a beautiful miniature of an A-bomb explosion and if he thought that because of this an actual A-bomb was a fake, brother, he was in for some lethal radiation one of these radioactive days. He saw the point and dropped the role of a doubting Thomas.

At the Giant Rock convention on Saturday night George Van Tassel transformed his retreat into an outdoor movie theatre. Andy Vale, a Hollywood cameraman, flew a film in that showed shots of unidentified objects in flight.

One shot was of one of these circular mysteries flying over Mulholland Drive, a highway familiar to the Hollywood inhabitants.

In my home in Hollywood I had seen more and better footage of this phenomenon about two years ago. Indeed I had run the films at least fifteen times in one night before top camermen, experts in special effects and aerodynamic engineers, civilian and Air Force reserve pilots. And none could explain the film away.

It is almost impossible to fake in color, they agreed, and it would have cost a fortune to have shot by special effects what these men got on film. They had returned

(Continued on Page 32)

PHOTO BY DICK HOFFMAN

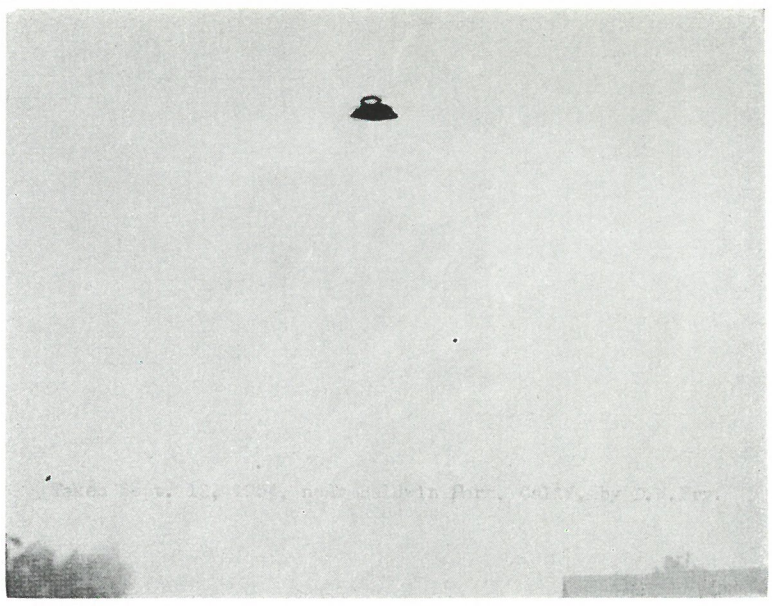
Looking toward the landing field of Giant Rock near Palm Springs where 5,000 gather yearly. On the speaker's platform is George W. Van Tassel, former Lockheed test pilot, saucerian believer and owner of the place where convention is held each Spring.

(Continued from Page 29)
from shooting a picture in the Andes. Their cameras were badly banged up. Repaired, they were testing them for "pan shots" about Hollywood when this object looking like a white Mexican hat came into view from the left. They followed it until it reversed itself, making a 180 degree turn, and flew back over Nichols Canyon.

One of the cameramen being an old White House newsreel photographer even changed to a telephoto lens to get a closeup of the object. It was mighty convincing stuff.

The first question that entered our minds was what would an object like that be doing near 2,000,000 people? We checked the terrain and ran into a bunch of terrestial anomalies. Those living deep in the canyon for an area about 1200 feet wide got perfect television reception. Outside those limits they had to run their cables to the top of the mountain.

Checking with geophysical instruments we found they went dead from noon to two in the afternoon. Those walking inside this zone soon developed a nausea. Along the cliffs were circular formations like giant mudpies which had been petrified thousands of years ago. We found all the earmarks of a vortex.



This photo was taken September 18, 1954, by D. W. Fry. The "saucer" appears to have two decks and conning-tower. At convention, Fry, an electronics worker from White Sands, told of his trip in saucer from the government proving ground to New York and back.

The object ran along high tension wires from Boulder Dam. Could the object be a scouting ship that was mapping the area to see if it was a magnetic fault zone? Was it from a large cigar-shaped space ship, sent out from beyond our atmosphere for this scouting and controlled by it?

We turned our findings over to Cal Tech but they were so busy working on projecting a satellite about the size of a basketball into outer space they couldn't be bothered by nonsense such as ours. That Bill Russel of U.S.F. probably could have heaved a basketball into outer space and saved us taxpayers $10,000,000 was not suggested by us because this was before he became the champion of the court game.

Being part-time researchers, we did not pursue the inquiry further as all of us had to get back to our more prosaic jobs. Later that film disappeared as if it had been a garden hose and had been swallowed by the earth.

I have had to take a lot of joshing because in my contribution to a solution of this mystery I reported that the crews of three grounded saucers were little men. That was hard to believe. If I had said they were built like Tarzan I would have had no trouble with doubters.

On a television program with Ken Murray I gave a possible explanation. "Maybe", I said, "they sent down their jockeys the first time. It was a long trip, and on long rides, as any horse-player will tell you, weight counts." That got a laugh. Logic usually does. As said before, a lot of us are crazy but not stupid.

City Hall At A Glance

By PHIL STONE

WHILE YOU WERE AWAY—All summer, Palm Springs' City Administration just kept rolling along . . . and so did the current of business and personal activities which creates the need for civic services.

The Waste Disposal Department collected garbage as usual, the City Street Department tried out a new type of oil surfacing, the Fire Department answered an average of four calls a week, and the Police Department added two special summer activities to its regular protection of life and property.

Property was given extra-protection by the Unoccupied List, under which some 400 homes were regularly checked while their owners were away . . . and life and peace of mind was protected by long-suffering patrol officers who on an average of four times a week were summoned by anxious homeowners to coax black widow spiders (which generally weren't black widows) out of mailboxes or kill rattlesnakes glimpsed briefly under oleander hedges (which generally were not rattlesnakes at all, but harmless king snakes, which help keep rattlesnakes down).

* * *

COUNCIL STAYED ON THE JOB—That conscientious conglomeration of unpaid public servants, the members of City Council, also kept right on rolling along . . . juggling their own vacation plans to assure quorums for City business during three formal meetings in June, two in July and one in August, and maintaining majority attendance at all informal luncheon conferences, which during summer were moved from El Mirador hotel to the Palm Springs Biltmore.

In line with the traditional easy desert living summer days, Council's meetings for July, August and September were held in the afternoons, starting at 3 p.m. . . . but council members, City officials and newswriters agreed that walking out even into a temperature of 110 degrees was heaven after spending two or three hours in the stuffiness of the old War Surplus building used as a Council Chamber . . . which no amount of evaporative blowing can keep cool.

Mayor Florian Boyd, a veteran of eight years Council service, voiced a vivid personal reaction when City Manager Robert W. Peterson reported that the June steel strike had not delayed construction of the new City Hall, which is scheduled to be finished this year.

Said the Mayor: "I just can't believe we'll be out of this sweat-box by next summer . . . it's too good to be true."

Incidentally, for July, August and September, the usual meeting day of Wednesday was changed to Tuesday . . . to make it easier for Council members spending part of the summer out-of-town to drive back Mondays for the Council luncheons and then stay over only one night for the afternoon meetings Tuesday.

* * *

O'DONNELL GOLF COURSE—This column is indebted to the Mayor, a couple of Councilmen and more than a dozen long-time desert resident and cover-to-cover Villager readers for friendly corrections on a couple of facts about Palm Springs' picturesque, palm-shaded O'Donnell Golf Club.

Most valuable of the clarifications was a letter from Long Beach attorney and villager Henry H. Clock . . . which seems eminently worthy of being quoted verbatim because of its clear presentation of a situation which puzzles many Villagers.

Mr. Clock writes that he was one of the original incorporators of the O'Donnell Golf Club and also did the legal work on the incorporation, at the request of the late Tom O'Donnell. Then, he explains, in these words:

The O'Donnell Golf Club was organized in June of 1944. Subsequently, on December 26, 1944, Mr. O'Donnell made a lease with the O'Donnell Golf Club covering most of the present land operated by the corporation, this lease being for a period of ninety-nine years and ending on October 31, 2043. Subsequently, in December, 1944, Mr. O'Donnell made a gift of the property, subject however to the lease to the O'Donnell Golf Club, to the City of Palm Springs. Consequently, the article appearing in your magazine is not quite correct, since the management of the golf course is vested entirely in the Board of Directors of the O'Donnell Golf Club which holds a lease on the property for the ninety-nine year period.

The Committee of Twenty-five referred to in your article has no special connection with the Golf Club and is a separate corporation. It holds a sublease on certain portions of the property leased by the O'Donnell Golf Club from Mr. O'Donnell, but the Committee of Twenty-five has no control or operation of the O'Donnell Golf Course or the Golf Corporation.